

Country Journal

Devoted to the Needs of the Hilltowns

Becket, Blandford, Chester, Chesterfield, Cummington, Goshen, Huntington, Middlefield, Montgomery, Otis, Plainfield, Russell, Sandisfield, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington

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GATEWAY

Committee nominates new superintendent

By Shelby Macri

The Gateway Regional School Committee selected Hampshire Regional High School Principal Kristen Smidy to be the new Gateway superintendent, subject to negotiation, on April 7, after David Hopson retires on Aug. 31.

Four finalists were selected out of 22 applicants; the school committee mem-

bers spoke about each finalist and chose who they thought would best fit the role the district needs. Committee Chair Michele Crane started the meeting with thanking the Superintendent Search Committee

for their hard work and dedication, she then emphasized



Kristen Smidy

the importance of sharing positive ideas during the discussion.

As the head of the search committee, Jason Forgue started the discussion and mentioned the amount of time and effort that

he and the committee put in shows how dedicated they

are not only to the school, but to the students as well. As the rest of the committee would follow suit, positive aspects were shared about the four finalists: Battenkill Valley Supervisory Union Superintendent William Bazyk, East Longmeadow High School Principal Gina Flanagan, Gateway Pupil Services Director Kurt

SUPERINTENDENT, page 10

BLANDFORD

Water breaks have band-aid fix

By Mary Kronholm

The center of town was without water overnight from Saturday to Sunday morning. Russell Stage Road and Maple Lane had already been without water a better part of the day on Saturday.

Sunday morning, April 11, at 8 a.m., Board of Health member Jennifer Girard and Town Administrator Joshua A. Garcia went door-to-door on Russell Stage Road and Maple Lane distributing an emergency boil water announcement to every household. Garcia drove the town's pick-

FIX, page 6

MIDDLEFIELD

Police reform complaints heard

By Peter Spotts

Police reform impacts on the rural communities continued to be the top issue for Sen. Adam Hinds, D-Pittsfield, and Rep. Natalie Blais, D-Sunderland, as their tour of the hilltown Selectboards continued on Wednesday, April 7.

Police Chief Jenny Dion told the legislators the town is not financially equipped to fund an additional 200 hour of training per officer and between full-time jobs, part-time com-

POLICE, page 8

WILLIAMSBURG

Opportunity open for street funding

By Peter Spotts

The Selectboard discussed funding for Mountain Street engineering to hopefully push the project ahead in the pipeline as Charlene Nardi said the town has a generous offer from the state to cover 83% of the engineering design costs.

The town's 17% of the cost would come out to about \$239,000, paid over the next three years. Nardi said she's working to figure out the exact annual

FUNDING, page 7

Happy Birthday!



John Little, who turned 99 on Sunday, April 11, waves at cars and trucks as a drive-by parade took more than 30 vehicles past the New State Road house to wish him a happy birthday. Also pictured is Little's son, Rich. The Montgomery Fire Department leads the parade of cars down New State Road to celebrate John Little's birthday. Little served on the Police Department for 52 years and the Fire Department for 32 years. More photos on page 9.

Photos by Peter Spotts

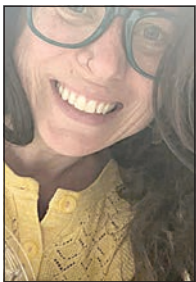


SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Kindergarten teacher awarded Grinspoon honor

By Peter Spotts

It's hard to find a more prestigious award than one where the recipient has been nominated by their peers, making the Pioneer Valley Excellence in Teaching Award, also known as the Grinspoon Award, a great honor for New Hingham Elementary School Kindergarten Teacher Jennifer Murphy.



Jennifer Murphy

The award is given to Western Mass. educators for their dedication and excellence. Nominees are made by the winners' colleagues based on excellence in teaching practices, subject mastery

and scholarship, effectiveness and creativity, impact on students, support of and positive impact upon other teachers' practice, participation in

professional development, and evidence of going above and beyond the classroom and school community.

"I was completely surprised. I thought we were having a baby shower. They set it up with balloons, cupcakes, it was really funny," Murphy said. "It's such an honor because your colleagues nominate you and that just for me really reaffirmed the work I'm doing here with my students, but also the collective community we have here as educators

and how we support and celebrate each other."

"[Murphy] truly understands her teaching philosophy, which effectively reflects her personal values and beliefs," New Hingham Principal Jesse McMillan said. "As our educational landscape constantly changes, she accepts this as an opportunity for learning and growth, seeking and implementing the best practices for all of her students."

GRINSPOON, page 10



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HILLTOWNS

VOICES OF SUPPORT



Angelique Toroni and Tara Kerstetter from the Chester Library share their message for survivors of domestic violence as part of the Southern Hilltowns Domestic Violence Task Force’s Hilltown Voice’s campaign to raise awareness to prevent and end domestic violence.

Submitted photo

New helpline launches April 15

“Ten to Ten,” a free, confidential helpline for people who abuse or may abuse their intimate partner, was launched on Thursday, April 15.

The Helpline is the first of its kind in the United States, although similar programs exist in Australia and the United Kingdom.

The Helpline will serve Western Massachusetts and will operate from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 365 days a year. The toll-free number is 877-898-3411.

Family, friends and professionals worried that someone may harm their partner can also call the Helpline.

The Project is part of a broad national movement that seeks to increase non-criminal responses to intimate partner violence through the creation of community-based restorative practice.

The Helpline is a collaboration between the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Behavioral Health Network and Growing a New Heart. An Advisory Board of regional partners as well as two rural domestic violence task forces from the Ware River Valley and the Southern Hilltowns will oversee and guide the project.

Properly dispose of drugs April 24

The hilltowns have multiple locations available for residents to partake in the 20th annual National Prescription Drug Takeback Day on Saturday, April 24.

The Blandford Town Hall, Williamsburg Pharmacy, and Worthington Transfer Station will all have collection spots available from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. to collect drugs. Drugs may also be delivered to police stations in Cummington, Southampton, and Williamsburg.

Any unwanted drugs can be brought in excluding liquids, needles, sharp objects, or anything of a similar nature. Chester-Blandford Police Chief Tammy Weidhaas said it’s important to dispose of unused or expired drugs properly to ensure they don’t fall into the wrong hands.

“It’s safer to get them out of your home so there’s no chance of them being taken by a guest or family member or, god forbid, if the house was ever broken into,” Weidhaas said. “The old school way was you’d dump it down your toilet and flush it down the toilet. It [Drug Takeback Day] keeps it out of our water system, it keeps it out of our sewer system. If you throw it in the trash, it’s going to keep it out of the hands of children or people who are not prescribed to them.”

Weidhaas will be overseeing the collection at Blandford Town Hall. At the conclusion of the collection period, drugs will be taken to be incinerated in Springfield. People bringing drugs to be collected should bring a mask and be prepared to social distance and follow other safety protocols for COVID-19 if needed.

For more information, visit northwesternDA.org.

Domestic violence program adds book club, discussion for clients

Hilltown Safety at Home, a program created to support anyone experiencing domestic violence in rural Western Massachusetts, works to connect victims of domestic violence with resources, solutions, and emotional support. Hilltown Community Health Centers are very excited to announce the creation of a book club for its clients and local survivors!

“Stop Telling Women to Smile,” by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh is a collection of interviews with women who have experienced harassment. She addresses how common street harassment is, the effect it has, and actions we can take to counter it. Through this book group, we hope participants take away a greater understanding of harassment and strong community connections.

At the conclusion of this session, participants will be encouraged to join the conversation the following week for a virtual discussion with the author, Tatyana Fazlalizadeh, hosted by the Elizabeth Freedman Center of Berkshire County.

This discussion will be held over Zoom on April 22 at 7 p.m. To register for this program and to receive a free copy of the book, please call Declan Nolan, domestic violence victim advocate, at 413-667-2203 ext. 341, or dnolan@hchcweb.org.

State Senator Adam G. Hinds applauds suicide prevention efforts

State Senator Adam G. Hinds, D-Pittsfield, in partnership with Home Base and community leaders, co-hosts the organization’s seventh roundtable for their statewide suicide prevention advocacy efforts.

“I applaud the work of Home Base and my fellow community leaders for tackling the issue of veteran mental health, an issue that so often exists in the shadows of our society,” said Hinds. “For the men and women who sacrifice so much for their country, we must continue these conversations, so they have the full support and services needed for when they come home.”

Home Base launched a statewide suicide prevention campaign in fall 2019b known as the 20->0Projectb by partnering with elected officials, VSOs, the VA, Vet Centers, Health Professionals, First Responders, and other community stakeholders to host a series of community roundtables. This campaign works to raise awareness and break the stigma associated with seeking mental health care, and creating a community-driven ecosystem to identify at-risk Veterans in local communities to connect them to care and save lives.

“I am deeply grateful to be a part of this necessary conversation. Our veterans have given and sacrificed so much for our country,” said Pittsfield Mayor Linda Tyer. “It is absolutely essential that we commit a full range of resources to address and support their mental health needs to ensure their overall well-being and quality of life.”

“The debt of gratitude, honor, and respect we owe to those who serve our nation can never be paid fully. This is especially true for those service members who carry the invisible wounds and symptoms of trauma associated with their service,” said North Adams Mayor Thomas Bernard. “Left unaddressed, these burdens affect lives, careers, and relationships, as well as the social and emotional wellbeing of our veterans and their loved ones. I’m so grateful to Home Base, our local veterans service organizations, and the providers and practitioners who help connect veterans in North Adams, Berkshire County, and Massachusetts to caring, supportive services that promote healing with honor and dignity.”

Over the past three years, through a state-funded initiative, Home Base has trained licensed mental health professionals in military culture and evidence-based treatment for PTSD in an effort to expand access to gold-standard care in local communities. They have also trained hundreds of health professionals and first responders to identify at-risk Veterans in their community and connect them to care.

“Our communities are here to uplift and help our veterans,” said Hinds. “We must ensure that resources and services are readily available, so our veterans are no longer forced to suffer in silence.”

CHESTERFIELD

Selectboard, state representatives discuss police reform concerns

By Shelby Macri

CHESTERFIELD — State Rep. Natalie Blais, D-Sunderland, and Sen. Adam Hinds, D-Pittsfield, discussed municipal issues and legislative priorities with the Selectboard at the end of March, starting with police reform.

Chairman Roger Fuller broached how the reform threatens the town’s police force.

“Chief Ed Murray brought it to our attention, and we’re really concerned for the department because our police are part-time,” Fuller said. “The officers might not have the time, energy, or schedule to do the extra training.”

While the bill doesn’t go into effect until July 1, Fuller pointed out that day is only a few steps away. Blais has been visiting the hilltowns in the First Franklin District over the past few weeks and police reform has been a hot topic in all of them. In response to the concerns, she and other members of the Western Mass. delegation met with Executive Office of Public Safety and Security Secretary Thomas Turco and Interim Executive Director of the Municipal Police Training Committee Chief Robert Ferullo to discuss the impacts the reform has on small departments in rural communities.

“I believe the meeting was constructive, that the Secretary heard our concerns, and that he was willing to work with us to identify solutions,” Blais said.

Blais added the meeting will require additional follow-ups from the delegation. She explained the concerns of the Western Mass. towns and cities were sorted into three areas — fiscal challenges, training challenges, and attracting and retaining officers.

There are a number of financial challenges associated with the reform, with budget season approaching potential funding solutions are needed the areas like the hilltowns. The challenges include the cost of paying for an officer’s time to attend police training, additional there will be backfilling for officers who are attending said training, and potentially transitioning forces to full time and those associated costs.

Training proposed by the reform also cause problems within the hilltowns, like police officers being part-time and often working other jobs which cause a unique barrier for training.

“The existing training locations are located far away from many western Massachusetts communities,” Blais said. “Having to drive to these locations adds hours that communities have to cover for hours worked.”

Additionally, if there are alphabetical training groups and multiple officers fall in the same grouping, it could hurt small police department’s ability to field an active roster while the officers are training. Blais said alphabetical training is already being looked at to be adjusted.

Attracting and retaining officers poses as a serious threat to small towns with a difficulty in hiring new personnel without sending them to the training academy. It will be difficult for the town to find officers to do part-time work when they can go elsewhere for full-time opportunities.

The Selectboard and Chief Murray are concerned about losing the town’s current part-time officers. Although this reform tries to achieve a uniform standard of training across the state, it potentially poses a threat for the sustainability of small-town police forces. Blais expects for more conversations to be conducted to address the concerns before the July 1 implementation date.

HUNTINGTON

COA activities include exercise, puzzles, walking challenge

HUNTINGTON — The Council on Aging is offering activities for seniors to do at home. Puzzles, craft bags, and exercise kits will be available for pick up on the third Friday of each month at Stanton Hall, 26 Russell Road in Huntington, from 9:30 to 11:30 a.m. during Brown Bag distribution.

Puzzles are isolated for two weeks before redistribution. Craft bags will vary each month. The exercise kit features an exercise DVD, hand weights, and exercise bands. Please call 413-512-5205 to reserve items for pick up.

Massachusetts Councils on Aging encourages all Councils on Aging to promote walking for seniors. Physical activity improves the overall health and well-being of older adults. Even modest levels of activity done daily for 30 minutes can prevent or control heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, colon cancer, and weight gain. Walking boosts energy levels, improves blood circulation, lowers blood pressure, combats depression, and reduces stress.

The Council on Aging is sponsoring a “Walking Challenge” and all participants will receive a walking journal, information on walking groups, and the Town walking map. The challenge is to determine a weekly personal walking goal and track the progress on the walking log. At the end of 26 weeks, participants are requested to return the log to the Council on Aging in to qualify for a chance to win a \$50 gift certificate for a new pair of shoes. The gift certificate drawing will be held in October. Please call 413-512-5205 to sign up.

Hydrant flushing starts Monday, April 19

HUNTINGTON — The Town of Huntington Water Department will be flushing hydrants from Monday, April 19 to Wednesday, April 21, from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. Residents may notice discolored water and experience low water pressure.

PLEASE RECYCLE THIS NEWSPAPER

College students organize supply drives for local families who need postpartum support

HUNTINGTON — Several classes of nursing students have been working with It Takes a Village, a local nonprofit organization that provides free postpartum support to families in Western Massachusetts, as part of their clinical practicum requirements.

As they were conducting their field study, they were alarmed to learn that the lack of diaper access to low-income families has reached a crisis stage. One in three families in the U.S. cannot afford diapers, and currently families are not allowed to use SNAP (food stamps) or WIC benefits to purchase diapers. A lack of diapers can keep babies from attending daycare, which means parents cannot attend work or school, and keeping a baby in a soiled diaper too long can lead to serious medical complications.

“We didn’t realize how pervasive this problem really is,” said Alyssa Waskiewicz, a nursing student at UMass Amherst. “It’s heartbreaking that families must choose between food and diapers.”

Students also discovered the vast public health implications for people who cannot afford menstrual supplies, a problem that is often overlooked.

“The COVID-19 Pandemic has made the problem even worse,” says Lisa Goding, program director for It Takes a Village. “Families are out of work, and many of the options they had for low-cost supplies disappeared overnight.”

Mobilized into action, the students decided to plan and implement concurrent supply drives for diapers, wipes, and other sanitary supplies. Elms College students focused on menstrual and incontinence supplies, collecting them through

COA opens farm share applications

HUNTINGTON — The Council on Aging is once again offering farm shares through Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture. The cost is just \$10 and covers all 10 weeks of the program.

Participants must be Huntington residents and 60 years old or older to qualify. In addition, they must be able to answer yes to at least one of the following four criteria: they receive SNAP benefits (food stamps), Medicaid, SSI, AFDC, welfare, or veteran’s aid; they participate in the Food Bank’s Brown Bag Program; they live alone; and their income is below \$25,760 or the total income of their household is below \$34,840 (only one share per household).

The application deadline is June 1. There are 18 shares available. If more than 18 applications are received, then there will be a random drawing to select the participants. If interested, please call Kathleen Peterson at 413-512-5205.

NORWICH HILL

The First Congregational Church of Huntington reminds everyone even though our physical doors are closed until further notice, we are most definitely open for worship, praise, ministry, and fellowship. We are an Open and Affirming Church inviting, welcoming, and affirming everyone — seekers, believers, and wonderers alike — on their journey of faith, to join in 10 a.m. Zoom Sunday worship.

Our reading from Luke 24:36-48 for the Third Sunday of Easter, invites us to wonder about the reality of resurrection and how that influences our daily living.

The pastor is always available to speak with you. If you do not receive our emails and would like to connect with our Zoom worship service and/or fellowship time, please contact Pastor Carol at firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com to receive the information you will need to participate or send us a message on Facebook.

Please use the phone numbers and email address provided to stay in touch or to contact the pastor. You are also invited to find us on Facebook at “Norwich Hill” for updates, information, and spiritual encouragement. For more information, please contact 413-667-3935 or 860-798-7771 or firstchurchofhuntington@gmail.com.

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OPINION

GUEST COLUMN

Why reforming the filibuster matters

By Lee H. Hamilton

COMMENTS
ON CONGRESS

As Washington turns its attention to infrastructure and other matters of policy, the Senate filibuster isn't commanding quite the same headlines as it did a few weeks back. But that's only because the issue is percolating behind the scenes. At some point, it will return to the limelight.

And when it does, you should understand what's at stake. Because as obscure as it seems, it actually goes to the heart of how we operate as a democracy.

The key point to remember is that as the country's population has shifted, a growing number of senators have come to represent a shrinking portion of Americans. In the House, this doesn't matter as much, since districts are apportioned by population. But in the Senate, current rules require 60 senators to agree to move a measure forward, with certain exceptions. This means that 41 senators can block most legislation, so in theory, the senators coming from the 21 smallest states—who together represent less than 12 percent of the US population—can keep the nation's agenda from moving forward.

It's hard to believe the country's founders would think this makes sense. And it's certainly a far cry from government of the people, by the people, and for the people.

In particular, it means that legislative initiatives that appear to have great popular support—including infrastructure spending, certain gun control measures, a higher minimum wage, even a legitimate path to citizenship for undocumented immigrants—will face tough sledding in the Senate. This is because it is remarkably easy for the leader of the Senate minority, Republican Mitch McConnell, to muster the 41 votes he needs simply to block legislation from moving forward. It's a silent and powerful parliamentary move: Without Americans as a whole or senators' constituents being any the wiser, bills die without coming up for a vote and there are no fingerprints on the murder weapon.

Now, the Senate wasn't designed to be like the House, and there's a lot to be said for maintaining rules that slow legislation down and ensure that the majority can't simply get what it wants without negotiating. But the key word is "negotiating"—when the filibuster is used simply to ensure that a president and elected majority can't get a bill considered, it's become something else. So while there appears to be little appetite in the Senate for ending the filibuster outright, there's strong incentive to explore alternatives.

These would be in keeping with a long history of filibuster reforms in the Senate: budget reconciliation starting in the 1970s allowed many bills related to taxing and spending to move forward with a simple majority; in 1975, the Senate changed the number of votes needed to move a bill forward from 67 to 60; and more recently, the Senate carved out exemptions on confirmation votes. In other words, there is precedent for change.

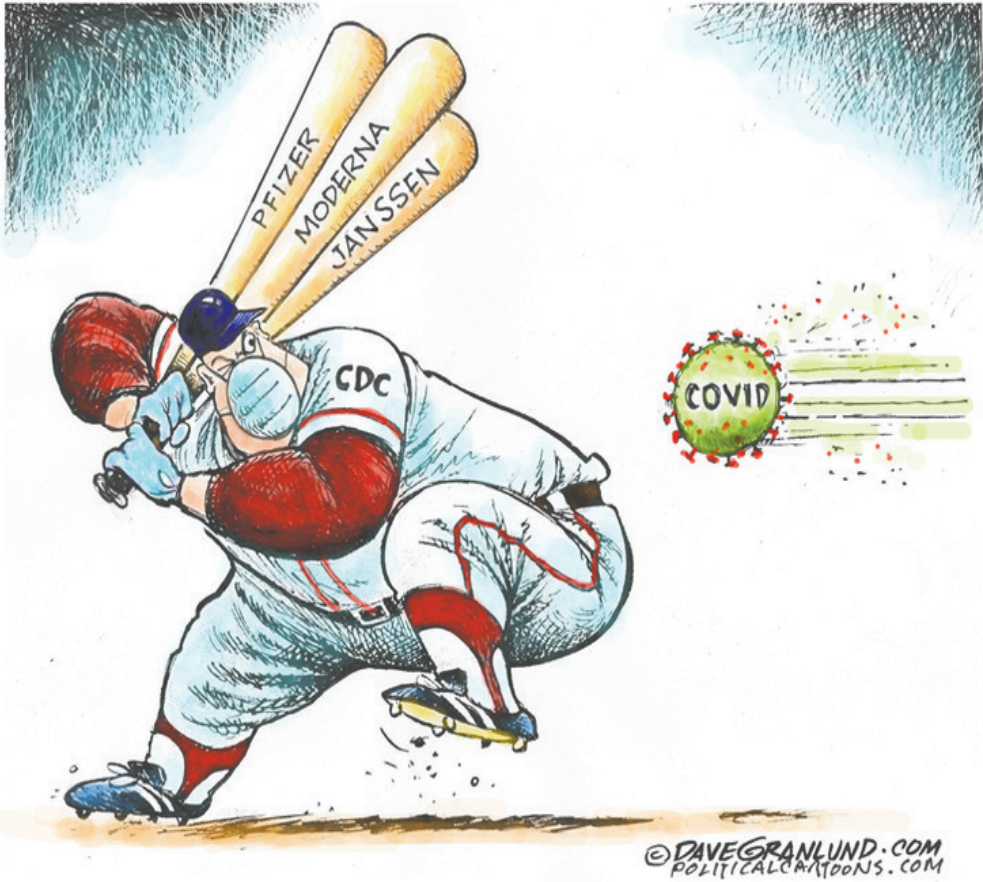
The options include expanding the breadth of bills that are exempt from the 60-vote requirement to move forward. Or the Senate could require more members (right now it's just one) to force a so-called "cloture" vote, which brings the filibuster into play. Or it could reduce the 60-vote requirement, either for all bills or for particular kinds. Or, as some

FILIBUSTER, page 7

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Corrections will be printed in the same section where the error originally occurred.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jason Forge is the right choice for Chester

Having served as selectman for the past six years, I can attest it is a position that, at a minimum, requires time, availability, hard work, and the willingness to work with others, both in town and out. Jason Forge has a proven record of dedication to the town of Chester and has served in myriad capacities. He is highly intelligent, possesses vision, and commits and follows through on the actual work, often above and beyond. Jason fights for what he believes is the best course and backs his efforts with facts. He was instrumental in reviving the Chester Recreation Committee and helped pull a pool of volunteers together to transform the Chester Ball Field into the "Field of Dreams" it is today. Jason also successfully serves as Building Commissioner for Chester and other area towns, and on Chester's Finance Committee. He is a member of the School Committee and was a

member of the recent School Superintendent Search Committee. Working on these different boards and committees has given Jason a solid background in what is necessary to be an effective selectman.

I have personally known Jason for some fifteen years since he and his wife chose to build their home and family in Chester. He is energetic, focused, solution-based in all he does, and loves the Town. If elected, I believe he will be an excellent Selectman and serve the town with the same passion he has displayed in his other duties. As I leave my time on the board, I urge you to vote for the candidate who will be present, give the position the thoughtful attention it demands, and give his all for the Town of Chester — Jason Forge. Thank you.

Barbara Pease Huntoon
Chester

Vote Jason Forge for Selectman May 1

During the April 5th Selectboard meeting, our three selectmen condemned in no uncertain terms several of the unfortunate attitudes plaguing our town — the infighting that takes place in town hall, the sniping on the Community Forum, and the whiners who contribute nothing to the solutions of the problems they complain about. This condemnation was a long time coming. For years, Chester has taken an attitude of complacency and laziness, of people convinced that their complaints would magically get solved if their post on the forum gets enough likes and indignant comments. The pool of people willing to take on the actual hard work of fixing the town, committing dozens of hours of their own time for community service and paperwork, dwindled.

Over the last few years, there have been few people as willing to put in the hard work needed in this community as Jason Forge. There are few boards, or task forces, or projects in town that Jason hasn't worked on, volunteered, advised, or fought for.

As a member of the school committee, Jason has been one of the few members calling for accountability, change, and a deviation from the status quo as Gateway continues to struggle. On a committee where the suggestions of the superintendent are enacted over 90% of the time, Jason has forced the greater school board to ask questions, demanding answers over how the institution that receives the majority of Chester's tax revenue is spent and what policies are instituted.

As Chair of the Superintendent Search

Committee, Jason also devoted dozens of additional hours vetting and interviewing potential superintendent candidates, sticking to his convictions of the best course of action for the district, even if it meant standing alone.

On the Finance Committee, Jason was a significant voice on the creation of the town budget, fighting for transparency and action for the town.

As Building Inspector, Jason streamlined the process for appeals, worked to clean up derelict buildings and brought in thousands of dollars in revenue for the town.

He's been a consistent voice and fighter for the community as well, committing hours of his time working with the Gateway Youth Athletic Association, coaching teams, writing town bylaws, and cleaning up and building new activities for residents of all ages to participate at Emery Field. He's a doer, problem solver, worker, consensus builder, and fighter with the fortitude to handle any criticism and insult thrown at him and learn from it.

The pandemic, the economic woes of the town and school, water issues, and traditional concerns over the highway department and fuel, show that now more than ever is a time for all hands-on deck in Chester. Now is the time for cooperation, for steady leadership, and for hard work. Now is the time for Jason Forge.

Vote Jason Forge for Selectman on May 1.

Brian Forge
Chester

EDITORIAL
POLICY

Letters to the editor should be 500 words or less in length. We require letter writers to include his or her name, town of residence and home telephone number. We must authenticate authorship prior to publication. We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions deemed to be libelous or contain unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks, defamation of character and offensive language. All unknown or alleged facts and quotations offered by the author need to cite credible, unbiased sources.

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OPINION

HILLTOWN HISTORY

The Road Less Taken

By Deborah Daniels

Hiking along the Dayville Access area and near the Littleville Fairgrounds yielded some interesting finds. First off, know that Littleville was sacrificed to build a flood control and water supply reservoir along 2 miles of Westfield River’s Middle Branch. According to 1962 Springfield Union newspaper article some 20 residences — both year-round and summer places — nine farms, one church, a fire station and two cemeteries were submerged in a manmade lake behind the dam. It took two years to build at a cost of \$7 million. Several properties in the village of Dayville also were abandoned to provide more area for flood waters to expand to if needed. Locals wanted a scenic road paralleling the length of the reservoir. They got a new road, the Skyline Trail but it did not run the length of the reservoir. Cost was cited as the reason for no scenic road. Taxpayers might like to know the prevent-a-flood challenge was met in 1987 when Littleville Lake was filled to 90% capacity and the water rose to 53 ft. behind the dam as a result of rainwater and snow melt.

Walking next to East River Road and near Kinnebrook Rd there is an extensive stone foundation evident in the woods. There are industrial looking metal parts scattered about and a separate small square cellar hole nearby. A map provided by Liz Massa dated 1894 denotes a sawmill in this area. Could this be the foundation? Wouldn’t you know it, some junk picker did not negotiate the turn onto Kinnebrook Rd, racked up the car and left it right at the scene! Those pickers know when to pick and when to leave. He left it. The river winds around in this area, loaded with rock formations and stony beaches. Lo and behold, right before my eyes was a racked-up watercraft before the canoe races even begin!

Next up was a scene from the past, those white cement road barriers standing guard at the road’s edge. No chance of a car careening out of control and plunging into the river here. Out of control boats only! This unsuspecting angler had no idea of the danger that was just averted. He reported the trout weren’t biting; hells bells, the fish knew the score.

When did those cement posts disappear from roadsides? When were those triangular sentries posted on this road? Did they really thwart our efforts to drive up, drive through and drive in the river? They are amazingly well preserved, although they would have had a steel cable connecting each of them and that is gone. The Model T automobile was mass produced in 1908. As soon as Americans got cars, there was no holding them down on the farm after that. Touring was the thing, only roads hadn’t caught up



Foundation stone of a sawmill found hiking the Dayville Access area.

Submitted photos by Deborah Daniels

with the motoring rubber wheels. Early road trips were an adventure. You were advised to carry chains, a shovel, axe, jacks, spare inner tubes and tools. You were warned to top off at every gas station because there was no telling where the next one was. You were to always verify the depth of puddles before crossing one lest you need a horse or tractor to pull you out. If you needed help your best bet was to build a fire to signal for help! Yes, you had to be resourceful if you took to the open road.

Early roads were developed by local towns. The main roads were pretty much the stagecoach road into and out of town, carrying the mail. The Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 created a federal highway program to fund state highway agencies to make road improvements. A slogan to get public support for paved roads was, “get the farmers out of the mud.” World War I stalled highway road building. The Federal Highway Act of 1921 created a Bureau of Public Roads to fund 2 lane interstate highways to be built by state highway agencies. The Depression brought about job creation programs that provided the labor to help build roads. Then WWII put priority on building roads that suited military purposes. Roads came about through a patchwork of local, state and federal efforts. There were many efforts to build scenic roads. In fact, there were 250 national auto trails built during the 1920s. The Lincoln Highway that went from NYC to San Francisco was laid out in 1913 but its 3000 miles weren’t completed until 1928. The Bronx River Parkway opened in 1923. Based on studies of European scenic roads, the Columbia River Highway in Oregon was constructed from 1913 - 1922. Our own Jacob’s Ladder scenic byway was opened in 1910 and the Mohawk Trail was opened in 1914 to automobiles. Early postcards show the borders of both these roads



A rusting vehicle.



A fisherman on Westfield River Middle Branch.

marked by white cement posts. Those early motorists appreciated the white pillars guiding them as the road twisted and turned over mountains. They white barriers have mostly vanished from the highway scene. Breakaway standards were set up to prevent injuries to drivers. Posts and barriers have to be designed to break off at a low point to the ground to reduce crash impact on drivers. Metal guardrails have replaced the cement posts on hills



A cement guard rail.



A racked-up boat in the river.

and near rivers. So, you won’t see these sentries standing at attention anymore. But you can enjoy a picnic by the river and admire a surviving bit of history dedicated to the safety of early drivers. Go explore.

Do you have a memory or historical curiosity from the Hilltowns that you’d like to share with your neighbors? Send your story and photos to countryjournal@turley.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Forge “vaccine” available May 1

Doses reserved for Chester Voters at Town Election Saturday, May 1, the Forge “vaccine” will be 99% effective for those seeking action, solutions developed through evidence-based research and inclusive discussion, and will provide oversight for all variants. You probably know Jason as the President of GYAA and for his tireless work and advocacy as a Board member of the Gateway Community Little League, or as our outstanding School Committeeman, or as the organizing/driving force of rhetoric to reality at Emery Park. You may not know he is also an Educator, a

key member of our Finance Committee, where he uses his Syracuse education, MA Economics, to benefit all. I have known and worked with Jason for years, his intellect and integrity are first class.

Clearly Jason is one of our best and brightest...one who models JFK’s “Ask not what your Community can do for you...ask what you can do for your community.”

I hope you will join fellow citizens and vote Forge for Selectman.

Bob Daley
Chester

WORTHINGTON

Potted plants available from COA

WORTHINGTON — In celebration of May Day, the Worthington Council on Aging will be distributing curbside pickup one four-inch colorful potted plant per household, in front of the Worthington Congregational Church.

The giveaway will take place on Monday, April 26, from 11 a.m. to noon.

Please order in advance by calling 413-238-1999. Supply is limited. This event is underwriter by the Rolland Fund.

Board the Hip-Hop Express May 10

WORTHINGTON — MUSIC Dance.edu is offering a one-hour exercise class for Worthington Seniors on May 10 from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. at the Worthington Town Gardens.

It will be a complete chair, dance, warm-up, and hip-hop class for all levels. Travel through time on the “Soul Train” and chair dance to hip hop and R&B songs along with creative props such as drums, and the

African maracas. The event will be outside, masks required, and six feet social distancing. Bring a sturdy chair and have some fun. If someone doesn’t want to participate, bring a chair and watch the fun.

This program is funded by a generous grant provided by the Worthington Cultural Council, a local agency, which is supported by the Mass Cultural Council.

BLANDFORD

LOST CEMETERY FOUND



From left, Russ LaPierre, Kim Kelliher, and Karen McTaggart pose next to the lost Jethro Jones Cemetery in North Blandford. Submitted photos



Left, Deep in the woods, not on a map, is the final resting place of Mr. Jones and possibly his wife marked only with field stones. This is a tiny Cemetery with one gravestone left of Giles Tracy revolutionary war hero, his wife's stone broken at the bottom and nowhere to be found, and one of the daughter's simple stone does remain. No fence, no gate, no sign, formally known as Negro Hill Road. Above, Ronnie and Finley helped locate the lost cemetery.

Public hearing needed for nuisance dog complaint

BLANDFORD — Kim Blanchette of Birch Hill Road brought to the board's attention that the pit bull Dixie belonging to John and Susan Vurovecz, also on Birch Hill Road, was "off leash" and came after her and her dog, Trooper. Blanchette had similar instances of the dog chasing her before and a public hearing was held at the end of last summer regarding Dixie's behavior and lack of control by her owners. Dixie was declared a Nuisance Dog and the board issued an order September 1, 2020, stating that Dixie "shall not

be allowed outdoors on the improved portion of the owners' property located at 12 Birch Hill Road; within 500 feet of any public way...or on any property owned by any other person (including public ways of the Town), unless it is secured behind a fence or held on a leash held by a responsible adult." On Thursday, April 8, Dixie was not on a leash nor contained in a fenced-in area, as had been proscribed, when she chased Blanchette and her dog. The owner apparently observed the incident, but did nothing, according to Blanchette

and witnesses. The matter has been referred to the town's Animal Control Officer Terry Donovan. A public hearing will be conducted to consider further action. The board reviewed capital expenditure items for the coming year, departmental expenses and the first draft of the warrant for the Annual Town Meeting on June 21. The Select Board announced that the Westfield Starfires baseball team will hold a Blandford Day at Bullens Field on Saturday, July 17, at 6:30 p.m.

BOH declares water emergency, boil order

BLANDFORD — As of April 11, 2021, residents of Russell Stage Road and Maple Lane on the town's water system, approximately 78 homes and one municipal building, must boil water at a rolling boil for one full minute before using for any human consumption until further notice. This is due to the water main break and having to temporarily bypass the break using unfiltered water. Questions should be directed to the Board of Health at 413-848-4279 ext. 410, or boh@townofblandford.com.

FIX

from page 1

up truck, clearly recognizable as such, while Girard placed the water emergency notice at each door. It all started Friday, April 9, with a break on Russell Stage Road. The leak in the water main was located under the Massachusetts Turnpike I-90 overpass. Unfortunately, the cast iron water main is sandwiched between two conduits, one for Verizon and the other for Eversource. The process of repair/replacement will be complex and difficult. A short-term solution, or work-around a possible long-term water outage, was created by the Water Department. Shutoff valves were installed before the overpass and after the overpass. Water was routed through

approximately 650 feet of fire hose from the fire hydrant above the overpass on Russell Stage Road to the hydrant on the downhill side of the overpass. According to Water Superintendent Gordon Avery, he had notified the Board of Health and they took care of the notification. He also said that additional chlorine had been added to the water to help impede any "possibility of contamination." The water flowing through this Rube Goldberg arrangement and must be at a rolling boil for one full minute before use for human consumption according to the Board of Health notice. The water break on Russell Stage Road was further complicated by a second water main break on Otis Stage Road just beyond the Highway Garage. Repairs to that area made it necessary to cut the water off to the entire town

center, not just Russell Stage Road. Avery said he waited as long as possible Saturday night before shutting off the water supply to the center. Water was eventually gradually restored Sunday morning shortly after 9 a.m. The return had to be gradual, according to Avery, to allow "the clear well to re-fill." He explained when there are water main breaks, "the clear well is depleted and needs to re-fill," which was why the water to the center of town was shut off overnight. Under current conditions, he added, should there be a fire, the Fire Department cannot use a hydrant as a resource. Fire Chief Dave Mottor said Sunday morning that surrounding towns are aware of the situation and are prepared to bring in water tankers if necessary. Considering the breaks, Avery said, "I hope this opens everyone's eye as to just how fragile the department is right now." He said that 50 years of neglect

have taken their toll and water mains need to be replaced. The buildup of residue over time is diminishing the water flow and making the pipes vulnerable to breaks. Avery said that the cooperation and help his department received from all the town departments was great, and much appreciated. He cited Garcia, Girard, Fire Chief Mottor, and Deputy Chief Tom Ackley and several other members of the fire department who helped by contacting neighboring towns Chester, Russell and Huntington, to borrow hose. Water Department Superintendent Gordon Avery and Water Commissioners Michael Keier and Brian Champiney met with the Selectboard on Monday, April 12, to discuss the two water main breaks over the weekend. Russell Stage Road's leak announced itself first Friday afternoon at about 3:30 according to Avery. Then Otis Stage Road followed closely afterwards Saturday morning when a four-inch main ruptured just west of the Highway Garage. There is no shutoff valve located in that area and it necessitated shutting water off to the whole center of town until repairs could be made. "There will be dirty water for a while," said Avery, noting the turbidity, and he advised any household affected with dirty water to just flush out their system. Any water filters will have to be changed as well. The select board declared a local emergency jeopardizing residents' health and safety, which in turn will permit the town to deficit spend in an amount up to \$100,000 to make the urgent repairs to Russell Stage Road. Questions from people attending the meeting virtually included safety of using dish washers, clothes washers, and showering or bathing.



Blandford Board of Health member Jennifer Girard posts water emergency notices at every home on Russell Stage Road and Maple Lane on April 11, accompanied by Town Administrator Joshua A. Garcia. Photos by Mary Kronholm



Board of Health member Jennifer Girard, Town Administrator Joshua A. Garcia, and Water Superintendent Gordon Avery discuss water break issues with Mark Boomsma, not pictured, in truck.



The beginning of the water break bypass just before the I-90 overpass on Russell Stage Road.

WILLIAMSBURG

FUNDING

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amount the town would owe.

“We have really been gifted this by the state, that 83%, that’s uncommon,” Nardi said. “We worked really well with the state on this project and we’re very grateful for all their assistance.”

Chairman Bill Sayre expressed a concern in funding the engineering design only to have the project not move to a construction phase.

“If we pay for this engineering, is there a guarantee the construction will happen?” he asked.

“I don’t see how they can deny this project forever. The problems it has is the same as every other project in every other hilltown because we don’t have the development the cities have,” Nardi replied. “The key is those projects, you have to move them along, getting them to 25% [design] is usually the click in. I feel like, yes, it is inevitable it will happen.”

She also said it is unlikely the project would go to construction before 2025, and 2026 or 2027 is a more likely window.

The \$7 million dollar project can never be fully funded by the town as it’s a complete reconstruction of the road, including drainage. The drainage also was not designed to protect Northampton’s reservoir if a spill happens on the roadway. Nardi said the town is pushing the project toward the Transportation Improvement Program to help fund it.

“The road is in very poor condi-

tion and takes considerable town funds to keep it in safe condition,” Nardi said. “This is an extremely busy road and was not designed to handle the heavy traffic, pedestrians and bicyclists that travel it daily.”

Nardi said she has also received input from a resident who is concerned fixing the road will open it up to more speeding issues. Selectman Dave Mathers pointed out engineering designs for the project would not be handling speed mitigation, it would be something for the town to address.

“There is concern about that road becoming a superhighway and they feel people already travel very quickly on that road,” Nardi said.

“We could ask them what their recommendation to set the speed limit is, but they’re not going to get into the mitigation of speed issues, that’s up to the town police and both towns deal with that,” Mathers said.

Town officials agreed the town can’t do anything to address the road issues as it currently drains annually to keep it serviceable. Nardi said residents will be able to share input during each step of the design process, so concerns like speeding will have ample time to be considered and addressed, starting with a public hearing once the project hits 25% design.

“That’s an opportunity for these folks to share and that would be a discussion for us, if the concern is legitimate, how do we plan to deal with that,” she said.

FILIBUSTER

from page 4

senators seem to favor, it could revive the requirement that senators intent on blocking legislation actually must get up and talk about it—which would have some drawbacks but at least would make it clear who’s standing in the way.

The Senate’s rules are a big reason we have a Congress that struggles to get things done—and a big reason our democracy seems to be hamstrung. I believe wholeheartedly in representative democracy, and in not trying to shortcut it or to restrict it: Proposals in front of Congress should be able to get a full debate and an up-or-down vote in which Americans’ elected representatives make clear

where they stand. That’s how we hold them accountable and how legislative bodies go about the hard work of finding broadly acceptable solutions to difficult challenges. The filibuster allows a small group of them to sidestep all that.

Lee Hamilton is a Senior Advisor for the Indiana University Center on Representative Government; a Distinguished Scholar at the IU Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies; and a Professor of Practice at the IU O’Neill School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

RUSSELL

Noble View hosts story walk

RUSSELL — The Hilltown Family Center and The Appalachian Mountain Club invite families to a story walk at Noble View Outdoor Center, located at 635 South Quarter Road in Russell.

Pages of “I Went Walking” by Sue Williams will adorn the 0.4-mile length of Mac Ross Trail which rises to a spectacular hilltop view. “I Went Walking” will remain on the trail for self-guided story walks until Monday, April 26.

Families are invited to come at any time, no registration required, during daylight hours to walk the trail and read the book at their leisure. Please be aware

that no restroom facilities are available at Noble View at this time and this trail is not handicapped accessible or suitable for strollers. Participants are to adhere to all posted AMC and Hilltown Family Center COVID-19 protocols including wearing a mask and social distancing.

This story walk was generously funded by a Community Development Block Grant through the Town of Chester and in collaboration with the Hilltown Family Center and the volunteers and resources of the Appalachian Mountain Club. There is no charge to participants for this story walk.

Lunches available at Senior Center

RUSSELL — Seniors can enjoy a delicious fresh cooked meal without stepping into the kitchen. Twice each week, Highland Valley Elder Services delivers freshly made take and eat lunches to the Russell Senior Center.

Distributed at noon on Tuesday and Thursday, the meals are specially prepared to meet the dietary needs of the older members of our community. While there is no charge for the meal, a \$3 donation is suggested.

To reserve a meal, call the Russell COA at 413-862-6217 two days before the lunch service day.

The menu on Tuesday, April 20, is

cheese omelet with sausage, steamed broccoli, orange juice, French Toast stick, and applesauce.

The menu on Thursday, April 22, is yankee pot roast with gravy, butternut squash, oven roasted potatoes, whole wheat bread, and tapioca pudding with whipped topping.

The menu on Tuesday, April 27, is vegetable lasagna with primavera Italian blend, apple juice, whole wheat roll, and birthday cake.

The menu on Thursday, April 29, is chicken cacciatore, split pea soup, cavatappi noodles, rye bread, and chilled peaches.

GOSHEN

Meltdown raises \$1.1k for firefighters

GOSHEN — Bolstered by \$747 in donations, this year’s Goshen Meltdown raised \$1,186.73 for the Goshen Firefighters Association.

The annual fundraiser has raises money for a local nonprofit organization through ticket sales and donations. Bob Labrie, who coordinates the Meltdown each year, said the money will go a long way for the small, volunteer fire department.

The Meltdown ended on March 29 at 12:16 p.m. It was very close to last year’s date and time, which fell through the ice at 1:38 p.m. on March 28. This year’s winner was Brianna Gayle, who grand-

parents own a cottage on Hammond Pond. Labrie said Gayle almost didn’t win as her postmarked March 25th letter didn’t arrive until April 7; from Yardley, PA to Goshen, it took almost two weeks for the letter to traverse a couple hundred miles.

After taxes, the permit fee and a few incidental expenses, Gayle will receive a check for \$439.73 while the other half of the ticket proceeds join the donation total for a cumulative total of \$1,186.73 raised for the Firefighters Association. Donations are still being accepted for those who missed the ticket deadline, but would like to contribute. Visit goshenmafire.com/meltdown for more information.

CHESTER

Check inactive voter status before May 1

CHESTER —The Annual Town election will be held on Saturday, May 1, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the town hall auditorium. Early voting is by mail only. Residents can go to the Mass.Gov website and download an application or call the Town Clerk’s office 413-354-6603 to register to vote.

Anyone that has not returned the Annual Street List in January will be put on the inactive voting list. Notices that the office has not received a resident’s 2021 street census will be resent after April 16. If someone receives the second one in the mail, please sign and return it to the clerk’s office as soon as possible so the voter can be taken off the inactive voters list. Please check all information for mistakes and list everyone in the household. If someone doesn’t remember seeing a street census this year, they probably didn’t.

On Election Day, some voters may find that their names have been placed on the list of inactive voters. The inactive voters list is made up of registered voters who have not responded to the annual street list or subsequent confirmation notice. Inactive voters may still vote, but will first be asked to show identification and will be required to fill out an affirmation of current and continuous

residence.

Under state law, every city and town is required to communicate with each household and compile an annual street list, also known as a city or town census. Most cities and towns choose to communicate with residents by mail.

If a voter fails to respond to the annual street list, they will be placed on the inactive voters list and their local election official will send out a confirmation notice, which the voter is asked to sign and return. The confirmation notice is meant to confirm that the voter continues to reside at the address at which he or she is registered, or if the voter has moved, update the address on file. Voters who fail to return confirmation notices will remain on the inactive voters list.

The ballot has contested races for the open Selectboard seat between Jason Forgue and Frank Pero Jr.; Greg Harrison and Duane Pease are contesting an open seat on the Board of Health. Currently, there is no one running for the two vacant positions for Library Trustee, a three-term on the Board of Assessors; and a two-term for town moderator.

For more information or questions about the election, contact the Town Clerk’s office at rdalesandro@townofchester.net or 413-354-6603.

☆ CANDIDATE’S STATEMENT ☆

Melvyn Hook —
Write in candidate for
Town Moderator

Melvyn’s (Mel) connection to the Town of Chester dates back to almost the turn of the century, both his parents and grandparents were lifelong residents of Chester. Mel moved home to Chester in 2012 to care for and support his, now deceased, aunt, Eleanor Laurent of Maple Street. Mel has served our country as a member of the U.S. Navy, is licensed by the Commonwealth to teach fire-arm safety, and is a certified NRA instructor as well as being an ordained minister.

Mel’s dedication and commitment to community are clearly evidenced by his actions. He works with Brightside for Families and Children and for eight years has been a primary organizer of their annual Toy Ride. He is the Chapter Chairman for two youth organizations that provide needed support, guidance, and structure to under-

privileged youth: The Woronocco Squires Manor, working with boys ages 9-11, and the Tekoa Chapter Order of DeMolay for young men ages 12-21. Mel has been awarded the DeMolay Cross of Honor by the International Supreme Council. Mel is Past Master of the Mount Moriah Mason Lodge of Westfield and is Most Wise Master of the Springfield Chapter of the Rose Croix and is the recipient of two Grand Masters Awards. Currently, Mel is the Chapter Chairman of the Massachusetts Widows Program and has received the Golden Gavel Award for his work in the organization. Overseeing many meetings in these many capacities, Mel is well versed in Roberts Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedures as well as Open Meeting Law. He understands the importance of impartial and fair administration of formal meetings and is committed to upholding the integrity and principles of these events. Please write in Melvyn Hook for Town Moderator on the ballot on May 1, 2021.



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MIDDLEFIELD

MIDDLEFIELD SENIOR CENTER

Lunch is served at the Senior Center, 169 Skyline Trail, Middlefield, each Wednesday at noon.

A \$3 donation is suggested. Reservations should be made, and meal choice stated, by calling and leaving a message at 413-623-9990 the Monday before. Pick-up and delivery are available.

The menu on Wednesday, April 21, is chef salad with ham, egg, cheese, lettuce, tomato, and cucumber, macaroni salad, whole wheat bread, and blueberry yogurt.

WESTHAMPTON

WELCOME BACK



The Westhampton Council on Aging held their first springtime hike coordinated by Ray Fontaine. The two-mile walk was the first since the Pandemic began and social distancing and masks were observed. It began on Edwards Road in Westhampton. Pictured left to right are Lynn Shapiro, Linda Chastain, Cecilia Stypek, Ray Fontaine, Julia Lennen, Janet Weber, Dave Herships, Deb Luckeus, Lilly Baxter, Chuck Horn, Wendy Blow.

Submitted photo by Norm Cotnoir

Overview MVP listening session to meet virtually Thursday, April 29

WESTHAMPTON — Residents are invited to join a discussion about the town’s municipal vulnerability preparedness on Thursday, April 29, from 7 to 8 p.m.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor’s guidelines for distancing and gatherings, the meeting will be held virtually. Login details for the Zoom meeting are available on the town website, Westhampton-ma.com.

The discussion will include an overview of the MVP program, climate change in Westhampton, town strengths and vulnerabilities, priorities, and discussions or questions.

POLICE

from page 1

mitments to Middlefield, and families there’s little time to attend training.

“We don’t do this job for the money. We do it basically to serve our community,” Dion said. “If they’re going to pull us away for however many hours they decide on...it’s going to be very difficult for our officers.”

Blais said one of the ways they’re looking to help with training time is maximizing online training hours. While 40 hours for each of in-person driving, fire-arms, and use of force and de-escalation tactics must be completed in person, the remaining 80 hours can be done remotely to reduce some of the time officers spend away from their communities.

“We’re trying to make sure we can maximize those online training hours,” she said. “We’d like to see more training offered at a physical location in Western Massachusetts besides Springfield.”

The Selectboard asked if consideration has been given to making exemptions for small town departments or giving them more time to comply with the new regulations.

“I have not gotten any traction on that,” Hinds said.

Everyone was in agreement additional training is good for all parties involved, but current implementation is difficult for the part-time departments.

“We’re not opposed to extra training for sure, it just has to be broken down for some towns like ours,” Dion said.

“Everybody agrees great, we’re going to have more training, having place officers and departments working at their A game...but there are serious implications for small towns,” said Hinds. “Talking to a lot of departments before these new requirements we were hearing some challenges and concerns and questions...this is all kind of accelerating those conversations.”

“The main bucket of concerns we’ve been hearing from communities are around the fiscal challenges...coupled with the backfilling of police officers that are attending the training,” agreed Blais.

Blais told the town officials representatives from Western Mass. had a productive with Public Safety and Security Secretary Thomas Turco and the Municipal Police Training Committee to discuss the concerns they’ve been hearing.

“It was a positive discussion where they recognized there are very unique challenges facing our rural communities and they are willing to work with us not only to nail down those challenges but also identify solutions,” Blais said.

Part of the conversation included the discussion of possible strategies to help departments retain their officers once they become full-time. There’s widespread concern among hilltown police chiefs that they’ll lose their part-time officers to larger city departments once they’re qualified to be paid full-time.

“Why would you stay as a part-time officer when you can make this a career?” Dion said.

“There is the ability currently to put in place a contract where if a community pays for your training, you have to stay in that community for two years,” Blais said. “The other thing we talked about was the MPTC to work with chiefs across the Commonwealth to come to an understanding that if you’re trained by a municipality that you’ll not be looking to remove those officers from that municipality for a certain number of time.”

The legislators thanked the town for valuable input and feedback, including Dion’s comments to let officers choose when to do their training to best fit their professional and personal schedules rather than having the state order each officer when they must come in for training.

Blais told Dion the MPTC has already reconsidering having training be based on alphabetical order. It’s currently gathering information on the current roster and training level for all Commonwealth departments, expected to be completed by May 1, and then evaluating what the process will look like from that point.

“I think they have heard our concerns and are willing to work with us in terms of solutions,” Blais said.

Blais and Hinds are also looking into looking for other ways to inject funds into the towns. One of these ways is through new bill Blais introduced to the House of Representatives to look at the costs communities have had to shoulder for dirt road maintenance and repair.

“Middlefield has the highest percentage of unpaid roads based on total roadway miles,” Blais said. “We’ve seen in recent years that we’re getting more and more freeze and thaw cycles that are resulting in multiple mud seasons... We’re hoping to begin looking at what those costs are to lay the groundwork for, hopefully, a new funding source in the next transportation bill.”

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John Little's great grandson Mason, left, is excited to wish him a happy birthday.

Celebration on Wheels



The line of cars queued up to drive by the Little's house stretches far up New State Road.



Dozens of vehicles came out to wish John Little a happy 99th birthday on Sunday, April 11. Little is a Montgomery staple with 52 years of service in The Police Department and as town constable. He also served for 32 years in the town Fire Department. A very dedicated and proud townsman, his daughter-in-law Patty Little proudly said, "he never missed a meeting" during all those years.

Photos by Peter Spotts



Birthday wishes in a colorful sign.



Many cars were adorned with festive decorations.



John Little's son Rich collects all the balloons cars dropped off as they drove by.



There were many balloons, cards, and celebratory greetings during the parade.



A large colorful banner takes up the whole side of the van.

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

Graduation planned for in-person commencement ceremony

By Peter Spotts

Last year, Hampshire Regional High School students experienced a unique, individual graduation ceremony edited together into a virtual class celebration and streamed online for all to enjoy due to COVID-19.

This year, Principal Kristen Smidy and school administration, following guidelines set by the Department for Elementary and Secondary Education,

are hoping students will be able to return to celebrating their penultimate high school moment as a class together again.

“DESE has given guidance for Commencement ceremonies, and Hampshire’s is definitely planned to be in person as a group pending any major changes in the DESE mandates,” Smidy said. “We already have lots of deposits out there to make it happen, so I really hope we don’t need to change anything.”

Some of the parameters required to

hold an in-person graduation require six feet of social distancing between parties and mask wearing at all times with the exceptions being speakers, who may remove their mask while speaking, and graduates crossing the stage to pick up their diploma.

No food or drink is permitted, the entrance will be monitored, and diplomas will be distributed via “no touch,” similar to last year with the diploma placed on a podium for the graduate to

pick up. Cleaning and disinfecting protocols will be in place.

For graduates and their families, each graduate will be limited to no more than six guests, who must be registered in advance and complete COVID-19 screening. Smidy said they’re still finalizing plans, but the students are excited to have the chance to be back together for graduation and she hopes, if all goes

GRADUATION, page 14

SUPERINTENDENT

from page 1

Garivaltis, and Smidy.

“I believe that Kristen had, during her interview, the right exact mix of professionalism. You could tell she took her notes and did her research, and she was able to come back with her own enthusiasm,” Forgue said.

The 13 people who make up the School Committee each commented that Flanagan was well educated, well spoken, qualified, had experience, had a background that could benefit the district, and was talented. Regardless of all these traits, committee members felt that Flanagan wasn’t the best fit for the district and that the other candidates better fit the role Gateway needs.

A similar discussion was had about Bazyk, as he has an extensive amount of regional experience having previously worked as a superintendent, he had practice and was personable during the interviews. Though with all his good reviews there were moments in interviews, feedback, and reviews that made the committee members ultimately decide that Bazyk wasn’t the right fit. Forgue mentioned that some feedback he received mentioned reasons and concerns for Bazyk leaving previous districts can directly match up with some of the problems Gateway is having, making him not the favorable candidate to take over after Hopson retires. This narrowed down the field to Smidy and Garivaltis.

“For me it comes down to our other two candidates Kristen and Kurt, I think both bring something to the table that are fantastic for our district right now. I think Kristen’s enthusiasm and her personality shown through in each of the interviews and each of the forums, I think her experience at a regional school district is a great positive for us, proximity to the area I think is a great plus to us as well,” Forgue said. “I think Kurt’s extensive background in notably our district, but also extensive other background

performances, background positions that he’s had, give us some also great steps forward, so to me it came down to those two.”

This split between Smidy and Garivaltis was consistent with each member of the committee. This split was also present for Student Representative Brian Forgue, who was able to attend the interviews and ask the candidates a few questions. While he agreed that Bazyk was definitely the most experienced of the four finalists, Brian Forgue said he found Bazyk spent a great deal of time talking about his previous experiences while not spending nearly enough time laying out a legitimate, specific plan for Gateway. He added while he didn’t interact with Garivaltis in his office at Gateway, he thought Garivaltis was the most passionate about Gateway specifically, having an energy about him that others have noted.

“My son and I have been talking about it for the past couple days; until maybe an hour ago I was still up in the air as to which way I wanted to go,” Jason Forgue said. “I truly believe, in my opinion, Kurt is the best option to go forward.”

The discussion between Smidy and Garivaltis continued with committee members speaking to Garivaltis’ experience and the feedback and reviews they’ve received from those who have or are currently working under him.

“Kurt Garivaltis is obviously enthusiastic, he comes in without any learning curve, he would undeniably hit the ground running,” Committee member Terri Garfield of Blandford said. “All of these things that have been said about Garivaltis, it’s very focused on the students. He knows the district and is very passionate about the district, he knows what he wants to do, he was also very strong. There’s one candidate, and that would be Kristen Smidy, so very early

on it was back and forth between a couple of candidates, but as these interviews went on it seemed that Smidy was really the clear choice.”

Committee members including Huntington representatives Melissa Nazzaro, David Lubbers, and Ed Renauld, and Russell’s Sarah Page each expressed that Smidy has fresh ideas, and is like a breath of fresh air for the district, is smart and dedicated, was impressionable during interviews, has connections to state representatives and senators, and has dealt with similar regional school issues that Gateway currently faces. These qualities and reasons made most of the school committee favor Smidy.

Crane spoke last and cut to the chase without repeating what all the other committee members observed and mentioned.

“I’m not going to repeat what so many people have already touched on; a lot of the things that were in my thought process. I had some positives and some draw backs for each candidate, I’m not going to go through all of my list, but I will say that the person who came out on top for me was Kristen Smidy,” Crane said. “Her practical experience in our neck of the woods with defending budgets, with community leaders and her excitement about that, and her genuine honest conversational style during interview put me at ease and I felt really, really impressed with her.”

Seeing a favorable candidate in the conversations Crane asked for a motion; Nazzaro obliged and made the motion to nominate Smidy as the superintendent choice for the district. Renauld seconded the motion opening for further discussion. Jason Forgue started the added discussion, mentioning that Garivaltis could transition to the position easily, there wouldn’t be a learning curve and he’d be able to hit the ground running;

favoring the option that would allow for the shortest transition time. Other committee members expressed their support for Smidy and that they believe she’ll be able to help the school with declining number in students and bringing new ideas to the school.

Each committee member received a great number of positive recommendations and positive feedback from students, staff, community members, and more speaking to the positive influence of Smidy. Committee member Lyndsey Papillon, of Russell, gave her support to Smidy explaining that her glowing reviews helped her choice.

“I reached out to Hampshire Regional employees and they said the loss would be devastating for them, and a really incredible gain for Gateway,” Papillon said. “She has shown how she can be collaborative and a problem-solver when faced with unique challenges that only administrators of regional districts could understand. That coupled with being a new take and fresh eyes on district challenges we’re facing, and where we want to be going when moving forward; my say is Kristen Smidy.”

After a brief, but still divided discussion between both Smidy and Garivaltis, the committee members called for the vote to be taken. Smidy received the position of Superintendent with subject to negotiation with only Jason Forgue opposed.

Smidy is expected to start on Aug. 1, with Hopson leaving on Aug. 31 to help with the transition.

“I anticipate sharing information with Kristen over the next few months and asking for her input on decisions that will impact the district and students when she is superintendent and supporting her in whatever ways possible as she moves into the role,” Hopson said.

For more information about the district, visit grsd.org.

from page 1

GRINSPOON

Murphy is nearing the end of her 15th year teaching, with all but one of those being at New Hingham. She has taught pre-K, Kindergarten, first grade, and second grade, gathering a unique perspective of being able to see how children develop in those early, impressionable education years.

“As an educator, seeing the unique stages of human development as it relates to the educational journey, I just feel really lucky that I’ve been able to experience it at different points along the way,” she said. “I’m really providing the initial building blocks and experiences for these young children that will be their foundation for the rest of their lives, really, when you think about it.”

“The students and families are fortunate to have such an innovative educator, particularly during one of the most important times of their educational career,” said McMillan. “She is a champion in the field of elementary education and her colleagues are fortunate to have such a collaborative, committed, visionary, open minded, and inspiring educator.”

The foundation Murphy is laying is a sense of wonder and joy when it comes

to the educational experience. The first questions she asks families during parent teacher conferences each year is “is your child happy and does he or she love coming to school?”

“It’s so important,” she said.

At the heart of her lessons is music. Whether it be piano or ukulele, Murphy engages her students through songs to help teach educational concepts in fun and engaging ways. Kids can often be heard singing the classroom songs while outside or on the playground.

“Music is infused throughout the school day and I have a little spinet piano that I play, and a purple ukulele, and we sing throughout the day,” she said. “Beyond the power of music and song to teach educational concepts to young children...it raises the energy of the classroom community.”

One of the most difficult challenges Murphy grapples with is helping her students with socioemotional needs that each student brings.

“Everyone has their own story, just like adults, and they all bring their story and their experiences and their strengths and their weaknesses into the classroom community,” Murphy said. “As an educa-

tor I always want to connect personally to my students and give them my support and nurturing that they need to be their personal best within our community.”

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Murphy enjoyed bringing in the families of her students and holding monthly tea parties where everyone could sing together and help create a fun community activity. She’s gotten creative with the changes caused by the pandemic, and her students have gotten to enjoy learning on the many acres of woods on the school property.

“The children have built these beautiful structures out of fallen trees and communing with the wood fairies and gnomes and painting with mud on the tree trunks. It’s basically free range out there,” she said.

Coming from a family of teachers, Murphy began her career at a young age, hosting classes for her three younger siblings and her dolls in her bedroom. She also performed “Annie” in her basement, which is used in her teachings today as she loves to sing the song “Tomorrow” with her students.

Murphy initially tried to break away from her family teaching tradition, but

after getting her Bachelor of Arts in English, she acknowledged her true calling and returned to school to get a teaching degree.

“When I got to college, I was an English major. I was on a different path,” she said. “Ultimately, we end up where we belong.”

She currently lives up the hill in Ashfield and has also lived in Conway for 18 years. She loves living in the hill-towns of Western Mass. and loves the community aspect being a teacher in small communities brings, from teaching siblings of students to seeing them around the town at libraries and parks.

“One of the things I love is I teach the siblings and the cousins, and I have the oldest child come in as a kindergartner and then their three-year-old brother or sister comes to the tea parties and then a few years later that sibling is in my classroom,” she said. “You just feel like you’re a part of something so much bigger.”

“I am proud of all that she has accomplished within our school community and all that she continues to contribute outside of the classroom, too,” said McMillan.



Keep in touch with kids at camp

Summer camp is an exciting way for children to spend their extended vacations from the classroom. Camps cater to various interests, including sports, crafts and even technological hobbies.

Children who attend overnight camps may spend several nights away from home. Some kids take this in stride, while others, possibly away from home for the first time, may experience some homesickness. Staying in touch while the kids are at camp can help alleviate fears and show children their parents care.

Camps now handle communication issues differently than they might have when today's parents were campers. While it once common for campers to send handwritten letters or short missives home to mom and dad, technology has changed that. Today's campers may have access to email accounts, or they even may be allowed to bring mobile phones along. This can facilitate communication, but it also may take away from the camping experience.

Parents need to find a balance between what might be too little or too much contact with campers. After all, camp is kids' chance to grow independent for a few days or weeks.

- Learn camp rules. The camp will likely provide information regarding correspondence. Camps may permit parents to send one-way emails and regular mail, but limit campers to handwritten letters only. Determine if mobile phones are allowed or should be left at home. Knowing the rules can help parents and kids plan accordingly.
- Pack correspondence supplies. Send kids to camp with fun papers, stickers, pens, and other crafty items. This way they'll be inspired to write home once or twice. Provide brief lessons on how to address an envelope for campers

- who may not know how.
- Check blogs and texts. Some camps may blog about campers' progress, post information on social media or send out mass texts. These messages can reassure parents that their youngsters are doing just fine. Figure out which tech options are available from camp administrators.
 - Send a care package. Treat the campers to some supplies from home. Pack camp-approved snacks and other reminders of home. Be sure to include enough for the entire cabin and your son or daughter will be the camp star.
 - Expect some silence. If camp is going well and campers' days are fun-filled, they may be too busy for

daily correspondence. Parents may get nervous when they don't routinely see or hear from their children, but chances are everything is going swimmingly.

The camp experience is often harder on parents than children, as campers have their friends and activities to keep them busy. Brief communication helps campers grow more confident and independent.

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Prevent dehydration during the dog days of summer

A person's desire to be outdoors can sometimes be at odds with the outdoors itself. The dead of winter tends to be a time of year when people know to stay indoors, but the dog days of summer can be dangerous as well.

Heat-related diseases like dehydration can put lives at risk. According to Johns Hopkins Medicine, children and people over the age of 60 are particularly susceptible to dehydration. Understanding dehydration and how to prevent it is essential for anyone who plans to spend time outside during the summer.

What is dehydration?

The U.S. National Library of Medicine notes that a dehydrated body does not have enough fluid and electrolytes to work properly. On an average day, the human body needs about three quarts of water. But the USNLM notes that anyone planning to spend time



outside in the hot sun needs significantly more water than that to avoid dehydration.

What are the signs of dehydration?

Johns Hopkins Medicine notes that people experience dehydration differently. However, there are some common symptoms that indicate someone is dehydrated. These symptoms include:

- thirst,
- less frequent urina-

tion,

- dry skin,
- fatigue,
- light-headedness,
- dizziness,
- confusion, and
- dry mouth and mucous membranes,
- increased heart rate and breathing.

Children who are dehydrated may exhibit additional symptoms, including dry mouth and tongue; no tears and crying; no wet diapers for several hours; sunken abdomen, eyes or cheeks; listlessness; irritability; and skin

that does not flatten when pinched and released.

How to prevent dehydration

Drinking plenty of fluids when working or playing in the sun is one way to prevent dehydration. Being sure to take in more fluid than you are losing is another way to prevent dehydration. Anyone, and especially people who sweat a lot, should keep a close eye on fluid loss when spending time outdoors in the summer. Sports drinks that help people maintain their electrolyte balance, such as Gatorade, can help prevent dehydration as well. Pedialyte is often recommended for sick infants or children who have experienced vomiting, as it can help restore electrolyte balance that was adversely affected when kids became sick. The solution can be equally effective at restoring electrolyte balance that was thrown off during heat exposure.

Dehydration poses a significant health risk at any time of year, but people who spend time out in the summer heat may be especially vulnerable. Limiting time spent outdoors on hot days and keeping a close eye on your fluid intake and fluid levels can help prevent dehydration.



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CLUES ACROSS

1. Pituitary hormone (abbr.)

4. Ceramic jars

9. Monetary units

14. Alias

15. "Superman" actor

16. Britonic tribe

17. Shorten

18. LA Dodgers manager

20. Hoarded

22. Theatrically portray

23. Noah's grandson

24. Dependent

28. Peyton's little brother

29. Cools the house

30. Principle part of

31. Type of wrap

33. Peels

37. Commercial

38. Make an attempt

39. Arrange in steps

41. U. Utah athlete

42. Old English

43. Trade

44. Nostrils

46. Ticket seller __Hub

49. Of I

50. Institute legal proceedings against

51. Takes apart

55. Doorway

58. Long int'l river

59. Trailblazing athlete Gibson

60. Former CBS News host

64. Sign language

65. Badgerlike mammal

66. Thin strips of wood

67. Brooklyn hoopster

68. Portents of good or evil

69. Footwear

70. When you think you'll arrive

CLUES DOWN

1. Batflower genus

2. Predatory seabirds

3. Fish farm

4. Arrangements

5. Go in advance of others

6. Bulgarian monetary unit

7. "__ Maria"

8. W. African ethnoreligious group

9. Wild Asian oxen genus

10. Vinegary

11. To this

12. Explosive

13. Female sibling

19. Orlando museum (abbr.)

21. Type of hoop

24. About Holy Father

25. Academic environment

26. Extremely angry

27. Surrenders

31. Swiss mountain pass

32. Sharp mountain ridge

34. Erases

35. Spielberg's alien

36. Absurd

40. Dorm worker

41. Used to make pesticides

45. The sister of your father or mother

47. A way to let know

48. Can't produce much vegetation

52. Small streams

53. Folk singer DiFranco

54. Weights

56. Start over

57. Black Sea resort city

59. Wimbledon champ

60. Corporate executive (abbr.)

61. Unskilled actor who overacts

62. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!

63. Of or relating to ears

THIS WEEK'S HOROSCOPES

ARIES

Mar 21/Apr 20

Aries, if you feel like every day is the same thing, then figure out a way to add some spark to the week. Invite friends for an adventure or embrace a new hobby.

CANCER

Jun 22/Jul 22

Don't pressure yourself into taking on more than you can handle, Cancer. Even though you may feel up to the challenge, there's no shame in accepting help.

LIBRA

Sept 23/Oct 23

Financial uncertainty has you rethinking things this week, Libra. Just be sure you are not being pennywise but dollar foolish. Make cuts across the board.

CAPRICORN

Dec 22/Jan 20

Capricorn, as tedious as research can be, it is ultimately necessary if you are planning a big move or a change in your financial situation. Seek professional advice, if necessary.

AQUARIUS

Jan 21/Feb 18

Aquarius, some details are still up in the air about a potential trip or adventure. But that doesn't mean you can't get excited about the prospects.

PISCES

Feb 19/Mar 20

Pisces, if you are being too critical of yourself, change your way of thinking. Others do not view you in the same manner.

GEMINI

May 22/Jun 21

Gemini, explore more creative pursuits in the days to come. You can find many great ideas and starter kits for arts and crafts projects at your local craft store.

TAURUS

Apr 21/May 21

Taurus, find ways to entertain your family and yourself without breaking the bank. Recreational centers and parks are often free and have many possibilities.

LEO

Jul 23/Aug 23

Leo, this week you may find yourself looking inward, which is not necessarily the norm for you. Try connecting with others as it may do you some good.

VIRGO

Aug 24/Sept 22

A new relationship could start this week, Virgo. Don't try to put on airs; just be yourself and you will likely find that everything will work out for the best.

SAGITTARIUS

Nov 23/Dec 21

Sagittarius, don't rush ahead on a project, even if you think you are ready to move forward. Give it a few more days of careful consideration before diving right in.

answers

T	E	N		S	H	I	V	E		T	E	V	R	
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S	E	R	V	N		S	E	T	V	S		E	O	
E	T	U												
O	V			S	E	V		P		N	V	R	V	T
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O	I		I	S	V	R	V	P			U	N	H	S
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S	T	R	E	B	O	H	E	A	V	D			L	N
I	N	E	O	I		E	A	E	E	R		V	X	V
S	T	H	V	B		S	V	T	L	O		H	S	T

9	4	8	7	2	1	6	5	8
2	8	6	4	5	8	7	1	9
5	7	1	6	9	8	8	4	2
8	5	8	2	7	6	1	9	4
4	2	9	1	8	5	8	6	7
6	1	7	8	4	9	2	8	5
7	8	4	5	6	2	9	8	1
8	6	2	9	1	4	5	7	8
1	9	5	8	8	7	4	2	6

9					3	5		
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	1		3					2
					7		4	6

SUDOKU

Here's How It Works:
Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku, the numbers 1 through 9 must fill each row, column and box. Each number can appear only once in each row, column and box. You can figure out the order in which the numbers will appear by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers you name, the easier it gets to solve the puzzle!

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OBITUARY

Kevin Lloyd Barnard, 66

Kevin Lloyd Barnard went home to Jesus on March 20, 2021 at the age of 66. Kevin was a beloved son of Ralph Otto and Lurena Mae (Fuller) Barnard born on Jan. 20,1955. Kevin grew up in Blandford, MA and attended the local school district. Kevin met his wife Susan working at Kentucky Fried Chicken at the age of 19. They were married the following year. In 1975 the couple hitchhiked across the country to Washington State. They returned to Massachusetts after their cross-country adventure to embark on the adventure of parenting. Melissa was born in 1977 and Kelly was born in 1979.



In 1980, Kevin and Susan moved to Washington state to be closer to Kevin’s brother and sister-in-law, Richard and Linda Barnard. Shortly after arriving in Washington, Mt. St Helen’s erupted. When the explosion of the mountain didn’t scare the young couple back to the east coast, they decided to make Washington their permanent home and welcomed a third daughter, Jamie, in 1982.

Kevin knew Jesus his whole life, but grew closer and deeper in his faith in more recent years. Kevin and Susan found a wonderful church community at

Crossroads Community Covenant Church in Yelm.

Kevin cared for all those in his life with a deep love and a generous heart. Every child that ever met him loved him. He was a generous friend to all. He will be greatly missed by many.

Kevin is survived by his wife, Susan of 46 years. His siblings including his two older brothers Bud Barnard and Rick Barnard; and two younger sisters Renaye Forgey and Kolleen Wickens. His three daughters, Melissa Rus and her husband Kevin, Kelly Wemp and her husband Barry, and Jamie Stumph and her husband Rick; and his 6 cherished grandchildren Seth and Ezra Wemp, Caleb and Eli Rus, Reese and Ruby Stumph. Kevin also leaves behind a large family of loving nieces and nephews.

Please join us in celebrating Kevin’s life on Saturday, April 17, from 10 a.m. to noon at Crossroads Community Covenant Church at 11520 Bald Hills Road SE in Yelm. Kevin was a big fan of motorcycles, fishing, Red Sox, and the Patriots. Please join the family in wearing any or a combo of all three in honor of Kevin.

DEATH NOTICE

BARNARD, KEVIN LLOYD
Died March 20, 2021

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Turley Publications offers two types of obituaries.

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The other is a **Paid Obituary**, costing \$100, which allows families to publish extended death notice information of their own choice and may include a photograph. **Death Notices & Paid Obituaries** should be submitted through a funeral home to: obits@turley.com.

Exceptions will be made only when the family provides a death certificate and must be pre-paid.

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SCHOOLS & YOUTH

GRADUATION

from page 10

according to plan, the outdoor graduation will be able to bring the class together for fun and surprises.

“I’m taking the lead on planning it, and I’ve gotten input from the senior student council members and advisors. I want to save some things as surprises for the class too, so it’s a balancing act between getting them excited for the event and still keeping some things up my sleeve,” she said. “The students I have spoken with have been amazing. They are so gracious and appreciative. They have said that they prefer to have the group event instead of the individual ceremonies like we did last year.”

Leading up to graduation, the school is working on preparing a special senior week, working with-in COVID-19 guidelines. Past years would normally see the seniors take a trip to High Meadows, but this year the school is working with the Westhampton Fire Department and Board of Health to hold a bonfire at HRHS on June 1.

“The Board of Health wants us to have several

bonfires, which was surprising for me to hear, but they thought it would allow [students] spreading out a little more,” Smidy said during the school committee meeting on April 5. “We’re thinking of getting a band and having the time where seniors open their time capsules or trade their year books to sign with their own individualized pens, which our senior advisors are looking into.”

Plans are also being worked on hold a formal senior banquet at the Log Cabin and Senior Awards Night. The week would conclude on June 4 with the commencement ceremony in the evening. It won’t be the same as old senior traditions, but this year could lead to a new one.

“I think they [the seniors] went from feeling sad that they weren’t going to do some of the traditional stuff to feeling really excited this could be a new tradition,” Smidy said.

Information about senior week, graduation, and other school activities will be available at hrhs.net.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING TOWN OF WORTHINGTON PLANNING BOARD

The Worthington Planning Board will hold a public hearing for a Citizen Petition to amend the Zoning By-Law frontage requirements from 400 ft to 280 ft, to be presented at Annual Town Meeting. Preparation of report from the Planning Board to accompany warrant.

The Hearing will be held **Friday, April 23, 2021 at 5:00 PM**. Remote public access will be provided utilizing GoToMeeting virtual software: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/700268037>. To attend via phone dial 646-749-3112; access code: 700-268-037.

A link to the meeting and the text of the Citizen Petition’s warrant article for Annual Town Meeting can be found on the Town website’s community calendar – by clicking on the date of the meeting. 04/08, 04/15/2021

TOWN OF HUNTINGTON PUBLIC SHADE TREE HEARING Set forth by

M.G.L. Chapter 87, Section 3 Public Shade Tree Hearing **Wednesday, May 5, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.** on the Town Common, 24 Russell Road, Huntington, MA and via Webex (Call: 1-415-655-0001, enter access code: 132 873 8701#, enter password: #)

Regarding removal of thirty-six trees marked with a purple dot on their base on Goss Hill Road between the intersection of Nagler Cross Road and #70 Goss Hill Road for the purpose of road construction.

Walter Wittshirk
Tree Warden
04/15, 04/22/2021

FINAL NOTICE AND PUBLIC EXPLANATION OF A PROPOSED ACTIVITY IN A 100- YEAR FLOODPLAIN TOWN OF HUNTINGTON HAMPSHIRE COUNTY, MASSACHUSETTS TOWN HALL RAMP IMPROVEMENT PROJECT APRIL 15, 2021

To: All interested Agencies, Groups and Individuals

This is to give notice that the Town of Huntington under CFR Part 58 has conducted an evaluation as required by Executive Order 11988 and 11990, in accordance with HUD regulations at 24 CFR 55.20 Subpart C Procedures for Making Determinations on Floodplain Management, to determine the potential affect that its activity in the floodplain and/or wetland will have on the human environment for the Town Hall Ramp Improvement Project (hereinafter, the “proposed activity”) under the Massachusetts Community Development Block Grant Program. The proposed activity is located at 24 Russell Road in Town of Huntington, Hampshire County, Massachusetts. The

proposed activity is intended to provide barrier free access to the Town Hall’s entrance by means of a new fully Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant ramp. The ramp will be installed between the Town Hall and Stanton Hall buildings. The proposed activity will result in temporary impacts to 0.025 acres of 100-Year Floodplain. Site work related to the construction of the ramp will include minor excavation, filling and grading.

The Town of Huntington has considered the following alternatives and mitigation measures to be taken to minimize the adverse impacts and to restore and preserve natural and beneficial values: the project must take place within the floodplain because the ramp is directly connected to the physical location of the Town Hall building. The only alternative that could be considered would be the “No Action Alternative”. Under the No Action alternative, the town would be left with a deteriorated, potentially dangerous, non- ADA complaint ramp entrance to the Town Hall. The town would not be able to achieve any of the benefits to be provided by the proposed ramp improvement project. The Town will comply with local and state floodplain permitting and protection procedure requirements will be followed.

The Town of Huntington has reevaluated the alternatives to building in the floodplain and has determined that

it has no practicable alternative. Environmental files that document compliance with steps 3 through 6 of Executive Order 11988 and/or 11990, are available for public inspection, review and copying upon request at the times and location delineated in the last paragraph of this notice for receipt of comments. This activity will have no significant impact on the environment for the following reasons:

The proposed activity will be replacing an existing ramp structure with a new fully ADA compliant ramp. The new concrete and wood built ramp will be slightly larger but will occupy roughly the same area of land as the existing ramp. The project will only have temporary impacts on the site including some minor excavation, filling and grading. The project will not result in any significant changes from its current usage. All mitigation measures will be followed and the Town will comply with all state and local floodplain protection procedures.

There are three primary purposes for this notice. First, people who may be affected by activities in floodplains and those who have an interest in the protection of the natural environment should be given an opportunity to express their concerns and provide information about these areas. Second, an adequate public notice program can be an important public educational tool. The dissemination of information about floodplains

can facilitate and enhance Federal efforts to reduce the risks associated with the occupancy and modification of these special areas. Third, as a matter of fairness, when the Federal government determines it will participate in actions taking place in floodplains, it must inform those who may be put at greater or continued risk.

Written comments must be received by the Town of Huntington at the Huntington Town Hall, 24 Russell Road, PO Box 430, Huntington, MA 01050 on or before April 25, 2021. Please contact Edward Renauld, Huntington Environmental Certifying Officer, during the hours of 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM, Phone: 413-512-5200. Comments may also be submitted via email at admin@huntington-ma.us. 04/15/2021

Cummington ZBA Hearing Public Notice

In accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. Ch. 40A, § 11, the Cummington Zoning Board of Appeals will hold a public hearing at the Community House, 33 Main Street, on **Wednesday, May 12, 2021, starting at 7:00 PM**, to consider the application of Jasa Farms LLC for special permit for a marijuana establishment. Specifically:

1. Seeking relief from Section 10-50.3.a.6. of the zoning bylaw which requires “Marijuana Cultivators shall be capped at Cultivation Tier

3 per lot/site, 10,001-20,000 square foot canopy... in the Town of Cummington.”, to allow a cultivation site of 90,000-100,000 square feet, Tier 11;

2. Seeking relief from Section 10-50.3.b.1. “All aspects of the (sic) any marijuana establishment... relative to... cultivation... must take place at a fixed location within a fully enclosed building...” to allow outdoor cultivation;

3. Seeking relief from Section 10-50.3.b.4.b. “No odor from marijuana... can be detected by a person with unimpaired and otherwise normal sense of smell... at any adjoining use or property.” to allow outdoor cultivation;

4. and other relief. The complete application is available on the town’s website (www.cummington-ma.gov). The property is located on Bryant Road, Assessor’s map 15, lot 4.1 (North side of Bryant Rd. between Potash Hill Rd. and Grout Rd.)

Any person interested or wishing to be heard on these matters should appear at the above-designated time and place. Virtual attendance is also available, there is a link on the town’s website.

It is possible that appropriate distancing and/or masks may still be required of all in-person attendees.

Michael Holden, Clerk
Cummington
Zoning Board of Appeals
04/08, 04/15/2021

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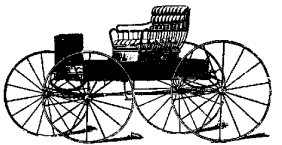
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